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ABSTRACT

The National Institute of Education's Career Education Program has the potential for building more awareness of dance-as-career, particularly in the school-based project segment. In that segment, the goals of career awareness, exploration, and entry by all youth are addressed through the development of curriculum units and the Occupational Exploration Program. Of the more than 130 units developed, only about 12 touch on the dance and most of these occur in the elementary grades. More potential lies in the Occupational Exploration Program as learning materials are being prepared at the junior high school level. The Arts and Humanities cluster will include components on visual arts, music, drama, literature, and dance. Materials for the dance component are still in the planning stage, but it is hoped that students who become aware of the dance in the elementary level units will be able to explore the dance-as-career in simulation modules at the junior high school level. (Two addresses are provided as sources of further information, and a third is listed as a reception point for suggestions on the general topic of career education for the dance.) (AG)

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Career Education for the Dance?

Several excellent programs including local efforts and the National Endowment for the Arts/Office of Education's Artists in Schools, have brought dancers to the classroom. Now, the concept called career education may link the world of dance and the student more directly. Activities within the National Institute of Education's Career Education Program have the potential for building more awareness of dance-as-career.

The National Institute of Education (NIE) forms the research arm of the Education Division, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Within the NIE, the Career Education Program administers federal funds for career education. Understanding and improving the relationship of education to work and careers is the Career Education Program's research theme. Youth and mid-career adults, especially minorities and women, form the main target groups.

The Program's major activities center around four projects which act as delivery systems of career education to different groups. The School-Based project sponsors the development of career education curriculum programs and materials for grades K-12. The Experience-Based project involves students and employers in a learn-by-doing alternative to the public secondary school. The Home/Community-Based Project informs unemployed adults about work opportunities in a local community, via telephone and other media. And the Rural-Residential Based project gives job skills and remedial education to heads-of-households and their families.

In 1975 and beyond, the Career Education Program plans to design demonstration projects to encourage occupational preparation out-of-school. Alternate ways to finance recurring education, such as tax incentives and entitlements, will be investigated as well.

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The idea of career education is to familiarize children with the world of work and with career options while they are still in school. Dr. Sidney Marland, former Commissioner of Education, initiated federal efforts in career education over three years ago. Since then, projects have mushroomed in U.S. school districts; teaching materials and policy papers have been developed for "infusing" information on careers into the basic curriculum, from kindergarten through high school.

Career education is not an enough concept that it could include the encouragement of students to become dancers. But careers in dance, more widely defined, have not yet received full notice. Chances are good that career education should help. The question is, where does dance fit?

Career education for dance seems related most clearly to one of the Career Education Program's major goals--to improve career awareness, exploration, and entry by all youth. The School-Based project addresses this goal most directly through its sponsorship of two different activities, the development of curriculum units and the Occupational Exploration Program.

Career education units have been developed for kindergarten through senior high school by curriculum specialists, teachers, students, parents, and administrators in six school districts across the country. Their work is being coordinated and refined by the Center for Vocational and Technical Education at the Ohio State University. The units focus on career awareness for the elementary grades, career exploration in the junior high school, and career preparation in the senior high school. But of the more than 130 units developed, only about twelve hint at the dance (as physical education) or cover topics in the creative/performing arts.

The units most closely related to dance fall in the elementary grades. For example, Grade 1 includes "Physical fitness preparation for the world of work" and "Developing locomotor skills." In Grade 2 we find "Here we go 'round the discovery course: Developing psychomotor skills." A teacher of dance would likely be critical of the units' simplicity. Consider, however, that they are a first for many teachers who are just now trying movement activities in the classroom.

Technical deficits aside, the link between the units and dance could be strengthened. Creative teachers will be able to use the units as a base. They can establish dance aspects during class activities and follow-up discussions. The units, which are scheduled for revision, publishing, and release during 1974-1975 are a subtle resource. They must be expanded upon to enhance their dance-as-career elements.

A second activity sponsored by the School-Based project, with more potential to interest people in dance-oriented careers, is the Occupational Exploration Program. The OEP is being developed at the Center for Vocational and Technical Education and at the Jefferson County, Colorado, Public Schools. These groups are creating learning materials designed to broaden junior high students' understandings of the world of work and to provide experiences in twelve occupational clusters.

The Arts and Humanities cluster will involve components on visual arts, music, drama, literature, and dance. Each component will eventually include three interrelated sets of activities, called modules. Simulation modules are designed to involve student in work-like situations, to give them a "feel" for a job in the cluster. Community involvement modules will provide the students with experiences in realistic occupational settings. And occupational information resource modules will allow quick and easy access to information about different jobs.

The materials for the modules in the Occupational Exploration Program are not technically related to the career education units described above. Yet it seems logical that students who become aware of the dance through the elementary level units could go on, in junior high, to explore aspects of dance-as-career in the simulation modules.

At present, only the visual arts component of the Arts and Humanities cluster is off the drawing board. A simulation module on setting-up-an-art-exhibit is expected to be complete by June, 1974. This module will involve students as exhibit directors, designers, and lighting crew in the planning of an actual display. Community involvement and information modules on the visual arts will follow.

The dance component of the cluster is still in the early stages of conceptualization. Hopefully it would be field tested during 1975-1976, and would place emphasis on wage earning occupations beyond just performing. Thus, it is likely that a variety of careers in dance: notation, history, costume design, therapy--would soon get the billing they deserve.

What we really need now are your ideas on the general topic of career education for the dance. If you would care to suggest them for the simulation, community involvement, or information modules, please write to:

Ms. Margaret Erickson
Jefferson County Public Schools
809 Quail Street
Lakewood, Colorado 80215

She can provide you with a copy of the conceptual paper upon which the Arts and Humanities cluster is based.

More Resource People

Although the revision efforts on the career education units are well underway, your inquiries about their content, use, and dance-relevant potential would be welcomed. If you would like more information on either the units or the Occupational Exp'oration Program, Please write to:

Dr. Norm Singer
CVTE-1900 Kenny Road
The Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio 43210

He seeks your ideas for modules involving dance as recreation, in parks and community center settings.

Requests for information about the National Institute of Education's Career Education Program may be directed to:

Dr. Corinne Rieder
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And finally, the author will welcome your ideas for needed research and development on career education in the arts.

THE AUTHOR

Carol Codori is an avid student of African dance and Feldenkrais. She enjoys evaluation research and group process, and is interested in the role of the arts in career development. Thanks to Mattie Smith, Jon Schaffarzick, Al Cunningham, and Charleton Price for their sensitive assistance in creating this piece.

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